

The Urban Land Institute - Charlotte District Council
Technical Assistance Program Report

Town of Mooresville

Mill Village Revitalization Study

Held April 2008



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	page 3
ULI – The Urban Land Institute	
ULI Charlotte	
Client/Sponsor	
Technical Assistance Program	
Acknowledgements	
Technical Assistance Program Report.....	page 7
Key Issues and Nature of the Assignment	
Background/Profile	
Key Stakeholder Interviews	
Panelists’ Comments and Recommendations	
Community Meeting Notes	
Appendix	page 19
Panelists’ Biographical Sketches	
Executive Summary	
Photographs	
Mooresville Mill Village Area Map	
Renderings	



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INTRODUCTION

ULI - The Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) was established in 1936 and has over 40,000 members from more than 80 countries. It is one of America's most respected sources of information and knowledge on urban planning, growth and development.



ULI is a nonprofit research and educational organization. *Our mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.* To encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences, ULI membership crosses a variety of backgrounds and professions; among the members are developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI Charlotte

ULI Charlotte is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute. It offers ULI services and benefits at a regional level. The mission of ULI Charlotte is to complete the ULI experience at a local level through continuing education, research and the exchange of ideas and experiences.



One of the duties of ULI Charlotte is to offer Technical Assistance Programs (TAP). TAP panelists are volunteer members who seek to further the objectives of ULI and make authoritative information available to those seeking knowledge regarding the long-term use of urban land.

Client/Sponsor

ULI Charlotte was engaged by the Town of Mooresville to provide a Technical Assistance Program. Mooresville is approximately 30 miles north of Charlotte, in southern Iredell County. In 2006, the estimated population of Mooresville was more than 27,000. Mooresville maintains its charm, even as the community is booming with new business and industry. It is described as a great environment for living, working and pursuing recreational interests.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Objective

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) is offered by ULI Charlotte to provide local municipalities and community-based nonprofit organizations objective and responsible advice on land-use planning, development and redevelopment issues.

Program Description

District Council TAP is a service offered as part of ULI's national Advisory Service Program. Since 1947, the Advisory Service Program has assisted communities by bringing together real estate, planning and development experts to provide unbiased, pragmatic advice for addressing complex land-use planning and development issues.

The ULI Charlotte TAP provides similar services to local government and community-based nonprofit organizations. Once a project is designated as a TAP, ULI Charlotte's District Council assembles a panel of volunteers with expertise in areas that are necessary to focus on the sponsor's particular problem or issues.

Because of the District Council members' diverse expertise, a broad array of issues can be evaluated. Members' expertise is available on commercial retail, office, industrial, residential, and mixed land uses in a multiplicity of urban forms.

Under ideal circumstances, a TAP panel will focus on issues surrounding a particular site. The scope of the analysis is intended to benefit a specific site in a neighborhood or community. Analysis will typically be organized around defining site characteristics and limitations, identifying and assessing community and neighborhood goals, considering alternative land-use strategies in the context of preliminary feasibility analysis, and making recommendations for next steps.

The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project, and presenting it to the panel. TAP panel members spend one day developing an understanding of the problem, coming up with recommendations, and presenting those findings and recommendations to the sponsoring organization.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Committee Chair

ULI Charlotte's TAP Committee is chaired by Tracy Finch, Development Manager of Harris Development Group, LLC, whose committee is responsible for the marketing, review and implementation of Technical Assistance Programs.



Tracy Finch

Development Manager
Harris Development Group, LLC

Panelists

Members of ULI were selected to provide a wide variety of experiences. The panelists for the Town of Mooresville TAP include:



Mary Ellen George

Architect
FMK Architects

Architect



Michael Kahre

Planner/Landscape Architect
Woolpert

Planner



Aaron T. Shier

Project Manager
LandDesign

Landscape Architect

Full biographical sketches are included in the appendix to this report.

Program Support/Management

Heather Crutchfield

Project Manager in Environmental Services
Terracon Consultants, Inc.

Program Support

Theresa Salmen

District Council Coordinator
ULI Charlotte

Program Manager

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES

Invitations to stakeholders were extended through personal invitations and a general solicitation from the Town of Mooresville. Of those invited, 20 individuals met with ULI panelists including town staff, property owners, and community leaders. The following individuals participated in the interviews:

Mitch Abraham - Town Board of Commissioners

Miles Atkins - Town Board of Commissioners

Amy Bucknum - property owner

Dennis Cowardin - property owner

Bobby Crabb - property owner

Yvonne Hart - property owner

Al Jones - former mayor of Mooresville

Bill Keeter - property owner

Kerry Miller - multiple property owner

David Rogers - Rogers & Associates, representing Cherokee Investment Partners

Gayle Rudisill - property owner

Rudy Rudisill - property owner

Joyce Souther - property owner

Hugh Sykes - property owner

Pat Trigg - property owner

Tim Brown - Town of Mooresville planning director/principal

Jim King - Town of Mooresville planner/project manager

Chris Bauer - Town of Mooresville transportation planner

Michael Harper - Town of Mooresville zoning administrator

John Finan - Town of Mooresville public works director



Participants at the stakeholders interviews in April, 2008

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REPORT

Key Issues and Nature of the Assignment

The TAP panel was charged with reviewing the Mooresville Mill Village area, which surrounds the former Mooresville Mill.

During initial discussions with the Town of Mooresville, ULI identified key issues the TAP panelists were asked to address. In a one-day study, three panelists:

- studied and discussed information provided by the Town of Mooresville;
- were briefed by town staff;
- toured the project area;
- met with key stakeholders;
- heard a variety of perspectives from community members and discussed issues and concerns; and
- debated the issues and framed recommendations.

Below are highlights of the assignment that the ULI TAP panel was engaged to address:

- street transitions between the Mill Village and the old Mooresville Mill;
- how the Town of Mooresville may encourage or assist with renovation/preservation of the neighborhood character; and
- how the renovations and street transitions could potentially impact the Mill Village and surrounding neighborhood (good/bad).

On April 24, 2008, ULI Charlotte conducted a session addressing these issues. The session consisted of a tour of the study area, an interview with key stakeholders, preparation of the plan and a presentation of the recommendations to the public. The report is intended to provide general considerations that the client might wish to use in future planning for the Town of Mooresville.



Aerial of Mooresville Mill



Mooresville Moors



Mooresville Mill

Historical pictures provided by the Town of Mooresville

Background

In Spring 2006, Jamie Justice, the town manager of Mooresville, appointed the Mill Village Revitalization Committee (MVRC) to compile, evaluate, and prioritize the needs of the neighborhood and make recommendations to the Town Board. The MVRC met to explore the community's infrastructural and service-provider needs and developed a list of short- and long-term recommendations:

Short-Term Action Items:

- create a zoning overlay district (Neighborhood Conservation Overlay)
- address neighborhood infrastructure needs
- improve community safety
- organize community clean-up

Long-Term Action Items:

- establish a permanent organization for Mill Village residents
- study ways to address the appearance and condition of rental properties
- promote homeownership in the Mill Village

Based on the prioritization of these issues, the Town of Mooresville engaged ULI Charlotte to conduct a one-day Technical Assistance Program.

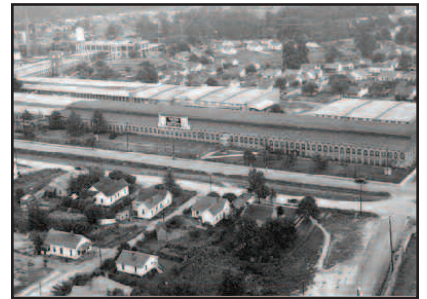


Mooresville Mill

Mooresville Mill Village Profile

Excerpt from the Mill Village Community Revitalization Report (by Centralina Council of Governments)

The Mooresville Mill Village neighborhood, located on South Main Street, was developed in connection with the Mooresville Cotton Mills (later Burlington Industries) beginning around 1902. The mill housing was built in stages, sometimes block by block, with nearly all existing mill houses having been completed by 1925. The Mill installed water and sewer lines in the Village, some of which are still connected directly to the mill buildings. The streets were later paved. Ballfields, churches, and company stores were also constructed for a self-supporting community.



Mooresville Mill

The Village extends all around the textile mill property, including across the railroad tracks and Broad Street. The Mill Village area is shown on the map that is included in the appendix.

Initially, the frame houses, with most containing three bedrooms, were rented to workers by the Mill. By 1948, there were approximately 470 homes in the Mill Village. In 1953-54, Mooresville Mills began selling the houses to individuals. Unlike the Cascade Mill Village to the north (also owned by Burlington Industries), the Mooresville Mills stipulated that initial homeowners had to work for the Mill to qualify for purchase. As subsequent generations have passed, however, the housing stock has turned increasingly to investment properties. In 2006, it was estimated that only 35 percent of the dwellings are owner-occupied.

For the mill itself, the Burlington Denim plant (its final version) closed in 1999. The mill site consists of multiple buildings on 39 acres, the oldest built in 1902 with additions made as recently as the 1970s. The mill site remains vacant, although various plans for its redevelopment have been advanced.

In addition to the role of the Mill Village in local and regional history, other significant aspects of the Mooresville Mill Village include:

- its sheer size (400-plus dwellings);
- the Village is largely intact;
- its location south of historic downtown Mooresville; and
- the close ties of the former mill workers in the Mill Village.

Additional profile information

In 2001, Cherokee Investment Partners purchased the 39-acre Burlington Mill site, with plans to turn the site into a mixed-use development that would include residential, retail and office uses. The project was originally expected to begin in the second quarter of 2007, with the project duration of approximately 5 years. Due to a number of market reasons, the project start date has been delayed; however, Cherokee and master developer Rogers & Associates claim they are still committed to the project. The anticipation for such large-scale revitalization brings optimism to Mill Village residents for a re-invigoration of their neighborhood. The plans for the site are available at www.mooresvillemills.com.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key community stakeholders were interviewed by TAP panelists in two group sessions. The following input was provided, with many points consistent between the two discussion groups:

Concerns identified

Community Appearance. The stakeholders believe that cleaning up the community should be a key initiative. The groups discussed ways to monitor, manage, and/or fine tenants/owners for lack of upkeep to a home, curb or gutters, for limited maintenance to the exterior of the homes and yards, and for poor screening of tenants. Additionally, a number of incidences were identified in which ancillary structures added to lots did not fit in with the character of the neighborhood, and the area has a limited number of trees along the streets.

Connectivity within the Village and to downtown is inadequate.

Brawley and College Streets are major vehicular thoroughfares through the Village for delivery trucks and standard vehicles. As such, the streets become congested, are dangerous as vehicles travel at high speeds, and have a limited viewing distance due to a steep hill. During peak traffic hours, there is considerable congestion; cars are parked at the intersection of Freeman and College, causing traffic accidents. Residents regularly park on the street because a majority of the homes do not have driveways. Stakeholders asked that the panelists consider one-way streets to slow traffic. Lastly, the railroad tracks offer another obstacle to connectivity between the old mill and the Mill Village. Safety from poor lighting, pets and vehicles were added concerns for pedestrians.



Typical Mill Village street

Redevelopment site. Egress into the Mill project and the addition of multi-family housing (apartments) in the Mill Development is believed to discourage rather than encourage the sense of community and involvement.

Potential opportunities noted

Preservation of the community. How can we encourage homeowners to keep their front porches neat, and create a walkable and desirable community? How can we establish connectivity between the present Mill Village and the new development to create a full sense of community? Can we offer an assistance program to encourage renovations in the area? What about the creation of an emergency repair program for low-income residents to help with specific challenged areas such as roofs, sewer, heat and handicap access? Add more green space such as parks, create better lighting, and reduce obstructions such as large structures and fencing. Create a community gathering space such as a community center and family gathering area. By adding a more appealing streetscape and trees between the downtown and Mill Village, there may be a nicer transition into the neighborhood.

Encourage better communication between residents and property owners regarding code violations and outcomes. Residents believe there should be a way to get in touch with landlords, residents, and tenants to help build a sense of community.



Mill Village neighborhood

General Site Strengths/Challenges

Strengths

- potential with the Cherokee Investments revitalization of the former Mooresville Mill site
- creation of the Mill Village Revitalization Committee
- creation of the neighborhood conservation overlay district
- community drive to preserve neighborhood character
- Mill Village Neighborhood Assembly (with website at www.mooresvillemillvillage.com)
- improved police presence and development of community watch

Challenges

- safety concerns regarding major thoroughfares
- need for community gathering place
- perceived decline of owner occupied properties
- nonconforming structures in district
- use transition between the neighborhood and the Mooresville Mill Village redevelopment plan and existing neighborhood
- aging/non-existing, infrastructure such as water, sewer locations, and lighting
- inadequate street right-of-way to facilitate sidewalk/street trees/infrastructure improvements

The ULI TAP panelists identified key areas of concentration. This plan is intended to be a starting point for discussion among Mooresville's leaders and residents.

Panelist Comments and Recommendations

Overall Thoughts and Observations

This is the beginning of a vision for the future of the Mill Village neighborhood

Upon discussion, the panelists found three areas of focus under which recommendations have been grouped: communication, branding and infrastructure.

1. Communication

While one of the most obvious areas, communication is also one of the most important recommendations. To accomplish the goals of this community, continuous dialog among the residents, the developer, and the Town about accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, services and research/education is critical. The neighborhood residents need to remain engaged over time in the revitalization and should look for manners in which to reinforce existing neighborhood churches as community gathering places (keeping residents inside the Mooresville Mill Village area). Effective communication can facilitate a level of trust and accountability. Not only does everyone help establish timelines and milestones for the community, everyone can establish effective methods to communicate design standards and organize community activities.

A number of areas can facilitate communitywide communication, as well as engage and establish a sense of pride in the Mill Village. Some specific examples that could be considered are:

- continued use of the neighborhood website (www.mooresvillemillvillage.com);
- develop inserts in the utility bills;
- establish an email network of residents using a listserve or website blog (there are a number of free services to create these);
- recognize properties through a communitywide award program, rewarding those properties with the greatest improvements, volunteerism, and good neighbor efforts;
- initiate community clubs (such as a garden club) whereby neighbors could socialize as well as learn to beautify their properties;
- establish periodic neighborhood cleanup programs; and
- host neighborhood watch meetings.

Communication must be regular and can be formal or informal. Communicate the positive as well as reinforce areas that the community would like to change. A core belief should be established that a strong partnership within the neighborhood will strengthen the community. Development and use of communication mechanisms supports and empowers the neighborhood residents, as well as facilitates effective communication. The greater the communication among the residents, developer, and Town can reinforce positive changes to the community, apply pressure to property violations in the area, and develop a sense of community.



Typical Mill Village neighborhood street

Communication is a communitywide effort that requires action from residents, the Neighborhood Assembly, and the Town, and does not fall on just one of these parties. Enhanced communications are critically important and are intertwined with the branding/way-finding and infrastructure recommendations noted in this report.

2. Branding and Way-finding

General panelist recommendations: research best branding practices with “inner city visits” to other local mill towns; pick up ideas from other communities that are similar to the Mill Village to help create new opportunities; establish a strong brand for the Mill Village and communicate it within the community; determine steps to make the brand visible (banners with existing signage or monuments); and use the brand as an opportunity to attract new property owners.

Branding, at any level, can make a substantial, positive impact on the cohesiveness and camaraderie within a community, while also enhancing the image and perception of the community. Way-finding and pedestrian connectivity are also important keys to sustaining a successful destination and to creating a vital center to which visitors and locals return time after time. When neighborhood visitors arrive in the Mill Village, each point of entry should welcome them to the community as if through the front door. Creating a sense of place helps define the community and allows people the ability to understand the hierarchy of the neighborhood. Way-finding can simplify a complex environment and change the way people experience the community.

As part of the branding effort, markers in the form of signage, architectural elements, or site furnishings can be used to distinguish the Mill Village from surrounding neighborhoods and other developments. Unique signage can be used to identify the Mooresville Mill (future development) and Mill Village neighborhoods.

The use of special street signage and ornamental lighting maintains the overall unique character of the Mill Village and gives a sense of place.

Primary and secondary markers may be provided to identify and help market the village. The identity markers would be designed based on the village’s cultural heritage. A logo could be incorporated into the design of the marker and duplicated through lighting and signage within the village. The secondary identity markers demarcate the entrances into the village to let drivers and pedestrians realize they are entering a unique area. The primary identity markers are located in the activity area of the development at the intersection of Main Street with Brawley and Mills streets. This is the location of the majority of redevelopment for the village and the main pedestrian crossings of Main Street.

The following are examples of steps that can be taken on any scale to enhance the Mooresville Mill Community brand and connectivity:

1. The use of unique street signs can give the specific Mill Village neighborhood within a larger context (i.e. downtown core) a sense of place and of significance. The neighborhood already has one major plus that many other places will never have – history. (*Figure 1a & 1b, Page 24*)



Typical Mill Village neighborhood street



Nesbit Park

2. Distinct street lighting can give a special ambiance to a neighborhood and can distinguish the location from any other location within the downtown core of Mooresville. It is important for the street lights to be at a pedestrian scale and height to give a feeling of safety and of “neighborliness.” (Figure 2, Page 24)
3. The creation of an “urban path,” with a successful combination of parks, greenways, sidewalks and street-retail frontage can greatly enhance the Mill Village neighborhood. It will give visitors a multitude of reasons to visit the district and it will give neighbors ample opportunity to communicate and interact. (Figure 3, Page 24)
4. Small-scale directional signage within the Mill Village can help visitors to the community feel at ease with way-finding and can help to establish an implied boundary between the neighborhood itself and the larger downtown district. (Figure 4, Page 24)
5. Larger-scale directional signage can link the Village back to the greater context of downtown Mooresville. This will provide a lifeline to the downtown district and will help to bring downtown visitors into the Mill Village. (Figure 5, Page 25)
6. The use of obelisks, fountains, public art, planting beds or other distinctive place-making elements at highly visible neighborhood entry points can greatly enhance visitors’ first impressions of the neighborhood. It can also help to define the boundaries of the neighborhood and create an iconic symbol for the community. (Figure 6, Page 25)
7. The use of street banners throughout highly trafficked areas – both pedestrian and vehicular – also help to brand the Mill Village as a unique and special place to live, to work and to recreate. These colorful banners, often seen incorporated into pedestrian-scale street lights, can serve a multitude of purposes: general neighborhood branding or the announcement of special events in the neighborhood are examples. The Town of Mooresville has a sign ordinance that may restrict the use of banners, however, upon approval by the Town Manager, they may be allowed. (Figure 7, Page 25)



Typical Mill Village neighborhood street

Each of these recommendations can be a catalyst for changes in perception of the neighborhood. By demonstrating the neighborhood’s commitment to the Mooresville Mill Community, this can encourage further investment and improvements.

3. Infrastructure

General panelist recommendations: Research urban street design guidelines from other towns/neighborhoods (standard and non-standard); research existing speed limits, signage, and traffic counts; inventory existing stormwater, power lines, water lines; identify areas for on-street parking (traffic calming); identify opportunities for street trees; implement community tree planting program that works with existing conditions such as power lines or narrow dimension; address transition between the

Mooresville Mills project and neighborhood through scale and use – project edges; identify specific areas for sidewalks; work to integrate transit effectively into the community; better define streets (street striping).

We proposed a hierarchy of street cross sections as a basis for organizing vehicular traffic in and around the Mill Village, addressing pedestrian safety and connectivity, and providing on-street parking for residents.

Pedestrian and vehicular harmony

To sustain a healthy and vital neighborhood, the local infrastructure must accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in a harmonious and safe way. The Mooresville Mill Village has the tremendous potential to become a destination that people drive, walk and bicycle to, not simply through. The first step in doing this is to create streets that visitors and neighbors feel were created for them, not for automobiles.

One significant way to reduce traffic speed and promote “feet on the street” is to establish a hierarchy of all streets in the neighborhood and create street sections that accommodate cars, bikes, joggers, and walkers. The following are proposed street types for the Mooresville Mill Village:

1. Tertiary – These streets are typically trafficked by those who live on them or are visiting others residing there. These streets should have minimum allowable lane widths and should permit on-street parking on at least one side. Because of the small amount of through-traffic on these routes, sidewalks are not absolutely necessary but can certainly enhance the pedestrian experience. Parallel parking spaces along these streets can be painted but usually are not; street signs indicating allowable zones for parking will suffice. Narrow streets coupled with on-street parking slow traffic, and on-street parking serves as a buffer between the street and residences. (*Figure 8, Page 25*)
2. Secondary – These streets are typically trafficked by local people who are familiar with the area and by those who are traveling from place to place in the neighborhood. These are traveled more frequently than tertiary roads and, therefore, should have more readily apparent means of calming traffic and integrating a harmonious relationship between cars and pedestrians. Like tertiary streets, secondary routes should incorporate minimal lane widths and should have on-street parking on one or both sides (ideal), bulb-outs, four-way stops, crosswalks at major intersections and sidewalks on at least one side. As traffic control devices, the bulb-outs should be used in street intersections, while incorporating sidewalks and parking vehicles on the street. This will offer a safety buffer between traveling vehicles and pedestrians. Secondary streets are commonly intersected by both tertiary and primary streets, and should act as a transition between the two types. (*Figure 9, Page 25*)
3. Primary – These streets are traveled by those driving both to and through the Village from other locations in the surrounding neighborhoods. These streets can be four or two lanes and should have speed limits clearly posted. Because of the relatively heavy flow of traffic and the larger lane widths, these streets require the most traffic calming measures and close attention to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. These streets should have painted on-street parking, bicycle lanes,



Typical Mill Village neighborhood street

sidewalks on both sides (ideally separated from the street by a planting strip), bulb-outs, and clearly marked crosswalks at intersections. Bulb-outs at street intersections and crosswalks help identify and organize on-street parking and act as traffic calming devices. Sidewalks on both sides of the street allow pedestrian travel on sidewalks at the residential edge and streetscape along commercial/retail streets (i.e. Brawly Street, where residential and commercial/retail property abut one another). The use of pedestrian-level street lights provides additional safety measures. These routes are ideal locations for banners, information kiosks, Village entrance monuments, and other neighborhood branding elements. (Figure 10, Page 26)

Other efforts may include:

1. Where applicable, four-way stops at the intersections of tertiary and secondary roads can work to greatly reduce the speed of vehicular traffic. The stops also give pedestrians a clear and safe opportunity to cross the street. Highly trafficked intersections along primary streets should also have clear crosswalks and street signage to better the pedestrian experience while in the neighborhood. (Figure 11, Page 26)
2. Some recent traffic calming studies indicate that building “speed tables” are not always effective or maintenance-friendly ways to reduce the speed of traffic through neighborhoods. Small changes to street profiles such as parallel parking lanes and bulb-outs with small and/or large landscaping slow traffic down by creating the perception that the vehicle lane width is narrower than it truly is. The Mooresville Mill Village can greatly benefit by adding bulb-outs, street trees and striped, on-street parking on many of the streets throughout the neighborhood. (Figure 12a & 12b, Page 26)
3. The implementation of well marked and continuous bicycle lanes along select routes will promote alternative forms of transportation around the Mill Village. As the Village matures in its use and popularity, walking and biking through the neighborhood will become even more desirable as available parking becomes scarce. (Figure 13, Page 26)

Pedestrian connectivity

The Mooresville Mill Village currently has a scattering of sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. While it is not necessary to install sidewalks on both sides of the road or even on every street, it is vital to create continuous sidewalk routes throughout the neighborhood. The implementation of pedestrian routes along secondary and primary routes should take priority over installation along tertiary roads, which can more feasibly happen over the long term and as topography allows. (Figure 14, Page 26)

An enhanced pedestrian system is required to strengthen the connections of neighbors to each other, and connections of the village to the neighborhood network would provide safe routes for users. The primary, secondary, and tertiary pedestrian routes correspond with the three street cross sections that were developed. The hierarchy was provided based on the street rights-of-way since existing conditions limited the type of sidewalk that could be designed. The hierarchy of pedestrian routes funnels residents through tertiary sidewalks along the edge of the neighborhood to the secondary sidewalks. The secondary sidewalks connect the majority of the



Typical Mill Village neighborhood street

neighborhood to the heart of the village, which is the mill itself. The mill is connected to the downtown through sidewalks along Main Street and Church Street, the rest of the city and potentially the region through a series of sidewalks and greenways. The primary sidewalks are focused around the Mill, since this will be the main activity area and, through the redevelopment, has the most potential for an ideal pedestrian cross section. Opportunities are provided for enhanced pedestrian crossings at Main Street to connect the two sides of the village, which is divided by Main Street and the railroad. At Brawley and Mill Street, pedestrian lights and warnings should be incorporated at the intersections with Main Street. This will also improve pedestrian access to the Mill area once it is redeveloped.

Road width considerations

It should be noted that current road width restrictions may limit initial implementation of some of the panel's recommendations on secondary and tertiary streets; however, there is precedent of alternative solutions being implemented in other parts of the state. The use of bulb-outs and painted on-street parking may be used on existing streets where they can be accommodated. On secondary streets, in many cases, actual bulb-outs could not, and probably should not, be built due to right-of-way issues, yet the use of on-street parking signs (showing parking zones, stating "no parking here to corner", etc.), which allows cars to park on-street, may be permitted even though streets may be "under-designed" based on the Town of Mooresville street standards.

The DOT uniformly applies strict rules to road design although there may be opportunities for coordination and cooperation in the creation of an overlay district. This special consideration has been considered in historic, urban neighborhoods such as the Mooresville Mill Village where the rights-of-way, street grids, and property lines were established long before the DOT rules and regulations existed. There are a number of examples of neighborhoods where these parking standards occur on tertiary and secondary streets, requiring cars traveling in opposing directions on these streets to share the road, with one driver briefly pulling over to allow the other car to pass. Part of the identity of the Mill Village is narrow street cross sections, street trees, and on-street parking.

Further street-by-street studies may uncover opportunities for the Mill Village to implement these recommendations through discussions with DOT that will require concessions by both parties in order to achieve the road improvements and maintain the unique and special place of the Mill Village.

Street transitions between Mooresville Mill and Mill Village Neighborhood

The proposed primary street connections running east-west (Church to Main Street) and north-south (College to Brawley) through the Mooresville Mill site should alleviate traffic congestion along the residential streets in the Mill Village. The primary street connections also provide pedestrian connections from the neighborhoods to the proposed Mooresville Mill development. The scale of the proposed buildings along periphery of the Mooresville Mill development should relate to the scale of mill houses. Existing mill houses are typically single story; adjacent buildings along the Mooresville Mill edge should be scaled accordingly. The development edge should face the neighborhood and not be a "back door" to the community.



Mooresville Mill and a typical Mill Village neighborhood street

Greenways and open space

Proposed greenway connections (currently under the Mooresville Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan) and the addition of new sidewalks provide pedestrian links throughout the Mill Village and to the proposed mill redevelopment. Additionally, the proposed greenway provides connection to adjacent neighborhoods and parks.

Neighborhood parks provide passive and active recreation opportunities, while also offering a gathering space for residents. A greenway system connects the village to the city's planned greenway network, with the proposed greenway connecting to the existing open space within the village as well as the Mill area. There is an opportunity to provide some open space within the Mill property that could be utilized for the Mill Village community as a whole. Residents expressed a need for a location where they could get together for functions and opportunities for active recreation.

This area could help fill this need and provide opportunities for events and recreation within the Mooresville Mill and Mill Village.



COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES

At the conclusion of the TAP, a presentation was made to the community. The panelists presented their findings and described their recommendations for the community. Below is a summary of the questions raised during the meeting:

Were one-way streets considered in this plan?

The network isn't really viable for this and it does not work to reduce speed. We believe that layers in the streetscape really work to slow traffic down (i.e. striping, bulb-outs, landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, and bike lanes).

You are not considering speed humps. are you?

This panel does not think they are effective.

If the mill project does not happen, does it mean that these recommendations will not happen?

The panel feels strongly about the redevelopment of the mill. If it does not happen with this developer, it will happen with another. Regardless of the mill redevelopment, these recommendations should still be considered for the prosperity of the neighborhood.

How do you make the bad houses on the street better?

Communication – getting the word out about the expectations of the neighborhood. Neighbors should encourage neighbors to take pride in their community. One resident told the story of a couple who bought the run down house next to them just to improve the neighborhood. You will find that no one wants to be the worst house in the neighborhood or even rent the worst house in the neighborhood. A little community pride and communication can go a long way.

How much consideration was given to community gathering places?

In the near term, the community seems to have space within the existing churches and parks. A longer term goal would be to try to locate space in the mill redevelopment. Other opportunities exist between the park and church. Specific leaders of the neighborhood should work with the Town to identify locations and fund strategies.

Do you have any incentives for ownership?

No, but neighborhood communication is a great way to get the word out about properties for sale. On the community website, links should be posted to any assistance programs that might help home buyers.

There is a need for sidewalks along the south side of the Mill. What can we do?

At a minimum, ask the mill owner to move the existing fencing away from the road. This is not a permanent solution but at least allows pedestrians to walk safely.

What is the feeling of business improvement districts? (Question was asked of the community not the neighborhood)

There is not enough support for this nor would a residential district generate enough income for the community to work with.

Is there a special tax for renters?

Mooresville does not have one at this time, but can explore the possibility of one in this neighborhood.

Can you do property liens for unpaid real estate violations?

The Town will have to research with the finance department.

Overall, the question and answer session had a common theme to urge residents to take control of certain challenges. Communication among residents can accelerate change. The

www.mooresvillagemillvillage.com website should be used to reach out to residents for all types of opportunities (i.e. for sale houses, ordinance violators, funding programs for homebuyers, community events)

APPENDIX

Panelist’s Biographical Sketchespage 20

Executive Summarypage 21

Photographspage 24

Mooresville Mill Village Area Mappage 27

Renderingspage 28

Panelist Biographical Sketches

Mary Ellen George, NCARB, LEED AP

Architect, FMK Architects

Mary Ellen George is a practicing architect with FMK Architects in Charlotte, N.C. A native of Laurens, S.C., Ms. George graduated with a B.S. in Design from Clemson University and received a Master of Architecture from North Carolina State University.

Her professional design experience has spanned a broad range of project types to include mixed-use developments in urban and suburban locales, infill multifamily, adaptive reuse, retail/commercial and medical office.

Ms. George is a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and is an active participant in the Young Leaders Group. She is currently serving as a mayoral appointee to the City of Charlotte's Historic District Commission. Ms. George is certified by the National Council of Architectural Review Boards (NCARB) and has recently achieved status as a LEED Accredited Professional by the USGBC.

Ms. George currently resides in Charlotte's historic Fourth Ward neighborhood with her husband and fellow architect, Gaurav Gupte.

Michael Kahre

Landscape Architect / Planner, Woolpert

Michael is a registered landscape architect in the State of South Carolina. Is a graduate of Ball State University with a Bachelors of Landscape Architecture and has 7 years of professional experience. He has been employed with Woolpert for 4 years and was previously employed with Oldham Planning and Design for 3 years. Michael specializes in land planning for clients in the private, university and federal markets. He has experience with all phases of work from schematic design to construction administration.

Aaron T. Shier

Project Manager, LandDesign

Aaron Shier graduated from Michigan State University's Landscape Architecture program in 2001 and began his career practicing Landscape Architecture for Beckett & Raeder, Inc. in Ann Arbor, Michigan. BRI's client roster exposed Aaron to the realities and rewards of design and planning as he built a strong foundation of knowledge in land planning, development and project management in the public and private sectors. In 2003, Shier was promoted to Associate; he served the firm for five years and was primarily responsible for projects involving streetscape design, park/recreational design and renovation, rezoning, university and K-12 campus site planning and design, playground design and landscape design.

In 2006 Shier relocated to Charlotte, NC to become a Landscape Designer for LandDesign, Inc., an urban design, planning, civil engineering and landscape architecture company. Shier, now a Manager, is involved in master planning, site planning and detailed design for commercial and municipal projects, residential community master plans, multi-family residential projects, and park and recreation planning. He also is involved in cost estimate preparation and analysis, construction document production, and permitting process. Aaron Shier's varied background, practical experience, creative skill set and dedication welcome innovative solutions. Shier is a member of Urban Land Institute, NC Downtown Development Authority and ACE Mentorship Program at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, which exposes local high school students to the architecture and engineering professions. He currently is working on design documents and implementation for the urban section of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway and Romare Beardon Urban Park in Charlotte, NC

Town of Mooresville Mill Village Revitalization Study

Held April 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ULI Charlotte was engaged to provide a Technical Assistance Program (TAP) panel to the Town of Mooresville. The panel was charged with providing:

1. Recommendations for street transitions between the Mill Village and the old Mooresville Mill.
2. Suggestions on how the town may encourage or assist with renovation/preservation of the neighborhood character.
3. Explanations for how the renovations and street transitions will potentially impact the neighborhood (good/bad).

In April 2008, a one-day ULI TAP was conducted with a panel of experts that consisted of an architect, land planner, and landscape architect. The team was briefed by town staff before touring the project area, conducting stakeholder interviews, and discussing and developing recommendations. At the end of the day, the panel made a brief presentation of its findings.

Overall thoughts and observations of the panel

This is the beginning of a vision for the future of the Mill Village neighborhood.

From its research and interviews, the team found several strengths and challenges to work from. First, the team identified that the potential redevelopment of the Mooresville Mill was essential for the community. The creation of the Mill Village Revitalization Committee and the neighborhood conservation overlay district were identified as strong examples in which the Town and community have been proactive in the preservation of the neighborhood. Websites have been created to keep neighbors informed, police presence has been increased, and a community watch program has been formed to address any safety concerns.

While the community has much strength, it still has several challenges to overcome. The major thoroughfares that bisect the community trigger significant safety concerns, and side streets do not adequately transition to respond to surrounding land uses. Infrastructure is old or non-existent in some locations, with no sidewalks, inadequate lighting and insufficient street right-of-ways. Finally, the redevelopment of the Mooresville Mill could be a great asset to the neighborhood, but it could also be a challenge if not handled correctly. There must be an effective transition between the high-density redevelopment of the mill and the adjacent single family community.

The panel spent several hours discussing recommendations, and established three main areas on which the community should focus its attention. Communication, branding and infrastructure should be the primary targets for the Town of Mooresville and Mill Village residents in the short and long term. Listed is a breakdown of more specific recommendations for each category:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(continued)

Panel recommendations

Communication

Continuous dialog among the residents, the Town of Mooresville and the developers handling the redevelopment of the Mooresville Mill is crucial to establishing a strong community fabric that works seamlessly for the community's improvement. Keeping residents aware of ongoing initiatives, services, and research/education will keep them engaged in the long-term community revitalization. A few recommendations of how to facilitate communitywide communication are:

- continue neighborhood website;
- establish email network;
- initiate community clubs;
- establish periodic neighborhood cleanup programs; and
- develop inserts for utility bills.

Communitywide communication can be formal or informal. No matter how the communication is established, it should reinforce the need for strong community partnership.

Branding and way-finding

Throughout the TAP, the panel determined that the existing community was strong and united but somewhat undefined. High traffic roads created a divide in the community, and parks intended to be community gathering places did not receive the visitors they were created to hold. As a result, the panelists recommended that the Town of Mooresville and the Mill Village community research some of the best branding initiatives in other "inner city villages." They saw a strong brand and visible way-finding as a means to creating a sense of place and a way to draw upon the community cohesiveness. With this, the community can attract new residents and visitors who will remember the "front door" of the community and be able to easily navigate an intricate street network. Below are the primary recommendations for developing a brand and providing long-term and short-term way-finding.

Many methods can be used to establish a brand. The Town and community should work together to find a special logo or element that is unique to the Mill Village that can be used in banners, street signage, ornamental lighting, or monuments. These branding efforts can have the following results:

- unique street signs with the community logo can celebrate community history and define the community within a larger context;
- decorative street lighting can highlight specific focal points of the community and provide a heightened sense of security (perhaps a community gathering place);
- an "urban path" can work to connect parks and open spaces through the community; and
- the use of public art or planting beds in highly visible entry points can make a positive first impression and help define the neighborhood.

These markers should be used in key entry points to notify citizens that they are entering the community. They also can be placed throughout the neighborhood to provide identity and market the entire Mill Village. Primary markers should be located at the intersection of Main Street with Brawley and Mills Streets. Secondary markers can be used to direct pedestrians and secondary entrances into the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(continued)

Infrastructure

In general, the infrastructure of the Mill Village is adequate. The panelist recommended that the neighborhood and Town inventory existing conditions and identify specific areas that need improvements. For example, a continuous sidewalk network is vital for pedestrian connectivity. Once the improvements are identified, organizing a street network will then help prioritize the necessary infrastructure. This will be a basis for managing vehicular traffic and, more importantly, creating safe and inviting streets for residents and pedestrians in the short and long term.

- primary streets are traveled by passers-by and residents. They are the wider streets with heavier traffic and should have bike lanes, on-street parking, planting strips and sidewalks.
- secondary streets are generally internal to the neighborhood and carry only the local traffic. Minimal lane widths and accommodating on-street parking will keep automobile speeds down while incorporating crosswalks, and more 4-ways stop intersections will create a safe pedestrian environment.
- tertiary streets are usually traveled only by residents living on those particular streets. Narrow lane widths and on-street parking spaces will serve to calm traffic and provide a buffer between residents and the street.

Greenways and open space, in addition to new sidewalk connections, can provide a pedestrian accessibility throughout the entire neighborhood. Open space proposed in the Mooresville Mill redevelopment can help create more synergy in the community by providing an opportunity for events and neighborhood gatherings.

Next Steps

The community has begun to implement a number of the recommendations. All recommendations should be fully vetted and studied. Stakeholders participating in community visits, commissioning studies on road widths, initiating discussions with DOT, and developing the Mill Village brand are necessary to move forward. Progress will take time to design, plan and implement. All efforts should be done in a coordinated effort so ongoing communication and a cohesive vision are maintained.

ULI Charlotte

ULI Charlotte is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute. It offers ULI services and benefits at a regional level. The mission of ULI Charlotte is to complete the ULI experience at a local level through continuing education, research and the exchange of idea and experiences.

One of the services of ULI Charlotte is to offer Technical Assistance Programs (TAP). TAP Panelists are volunteer members who seek to further the objectives of ULI and make authoritative information available to those seeking knowledge regarding the long-term use of urban land.

PHOTOGRAPHS



(Figures 1a & 1b) Unique street signs in the historic neighborhoods.



(Figure 2) An example of unique, pedestrian scale street lighting.



(Figures 3) An urban path that features directional signage can greatly enhance a community.



(Figure 4) Small kiosks and directional signage within the neighborhood can help visitors feel welcome.



(Figure 5) Large-scale signage.



(Figure 6) Gateway elements into the neighborhood can provide a memorable "mental photo" of the Village.



(Figure 7) Pedestrian-scale lights can also be an ideal location for banners throughout the neighborhood.



(Figure 8) Tertiary streets are the least traveled of all types and should have on-street parking.



(Figure 9) Secondary streets link tertiary to primary routes and should be designed accordingly.



(Figure 10) Primary streets are designed to move vehicles and pedestrians efficiently and harmoniously.



(Figure 11) 4-way stops reduce the speed of traffic and allow for safe navigation of streets by pedestrians.



(Figures 12a & 12b) Bulb-outs can create a perceived narrowing of the road, which can help reduce vehicular speed.

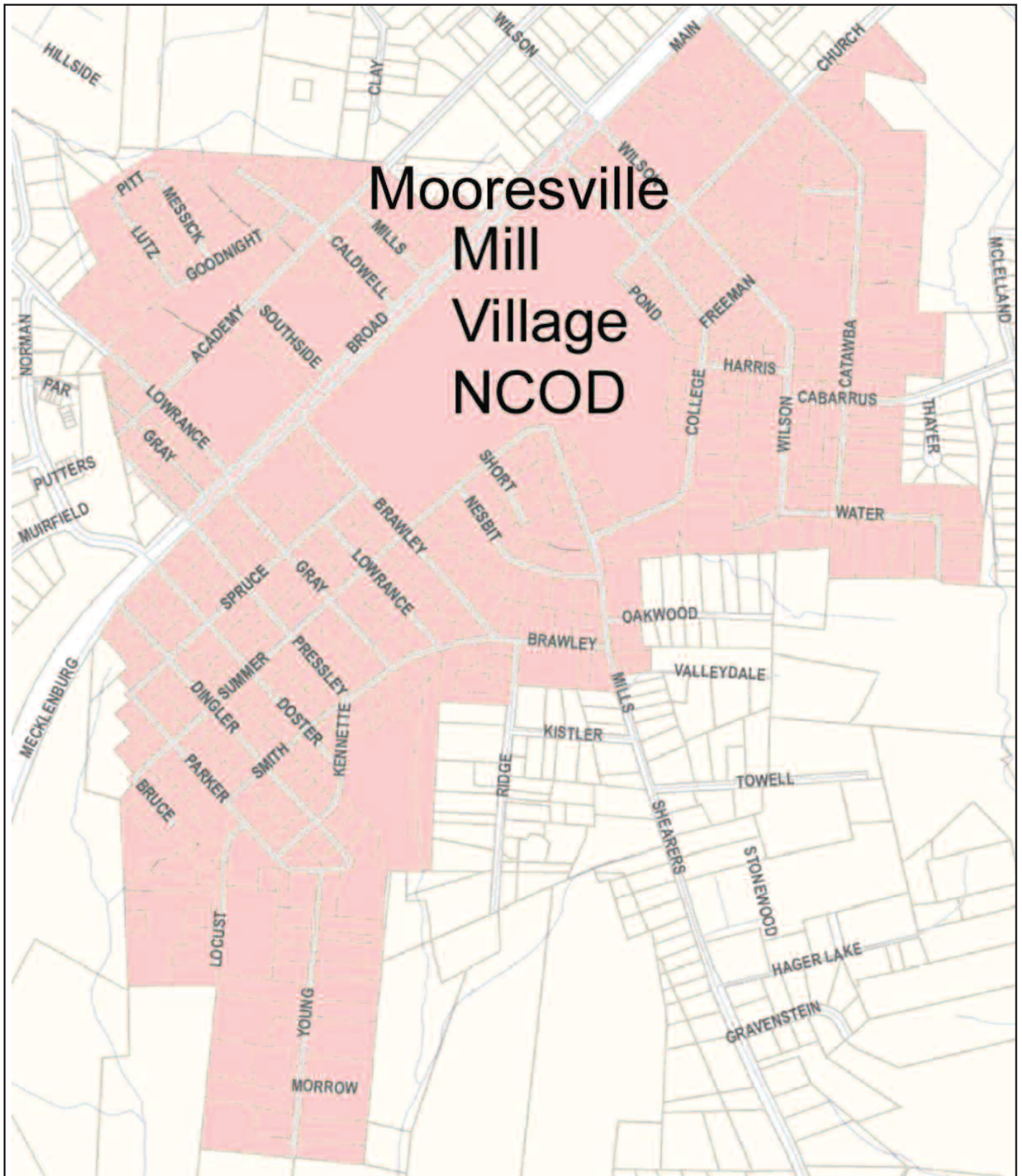


(Figure 13) Bicycle lanes can promote alternative forms of transportation.



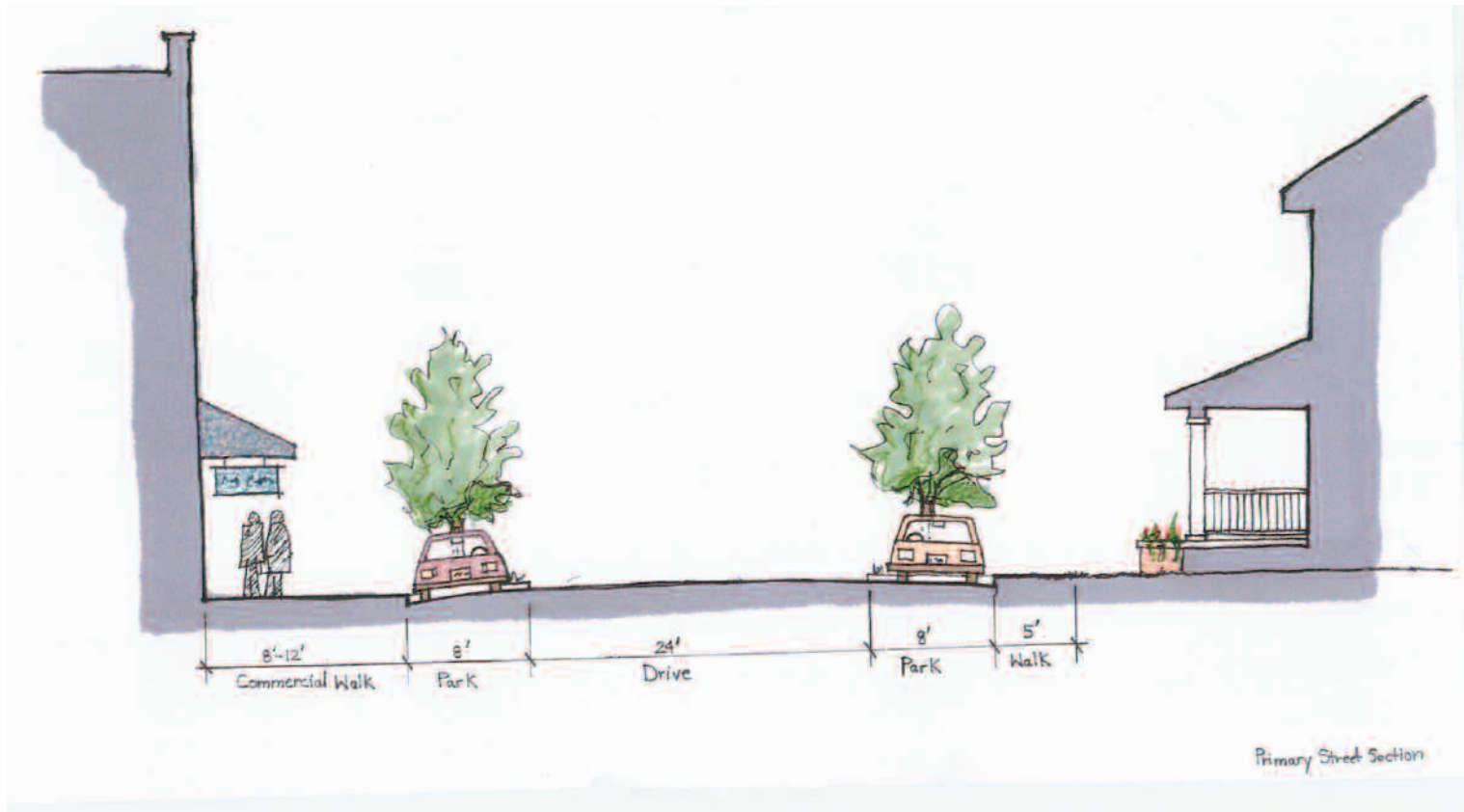
(Figure 14) Continuous sidewalks are an important component of a successful pedestrian experience.

MOORESVILLE MILL VILLAGE AREA MAP



Mooreville Mill Village

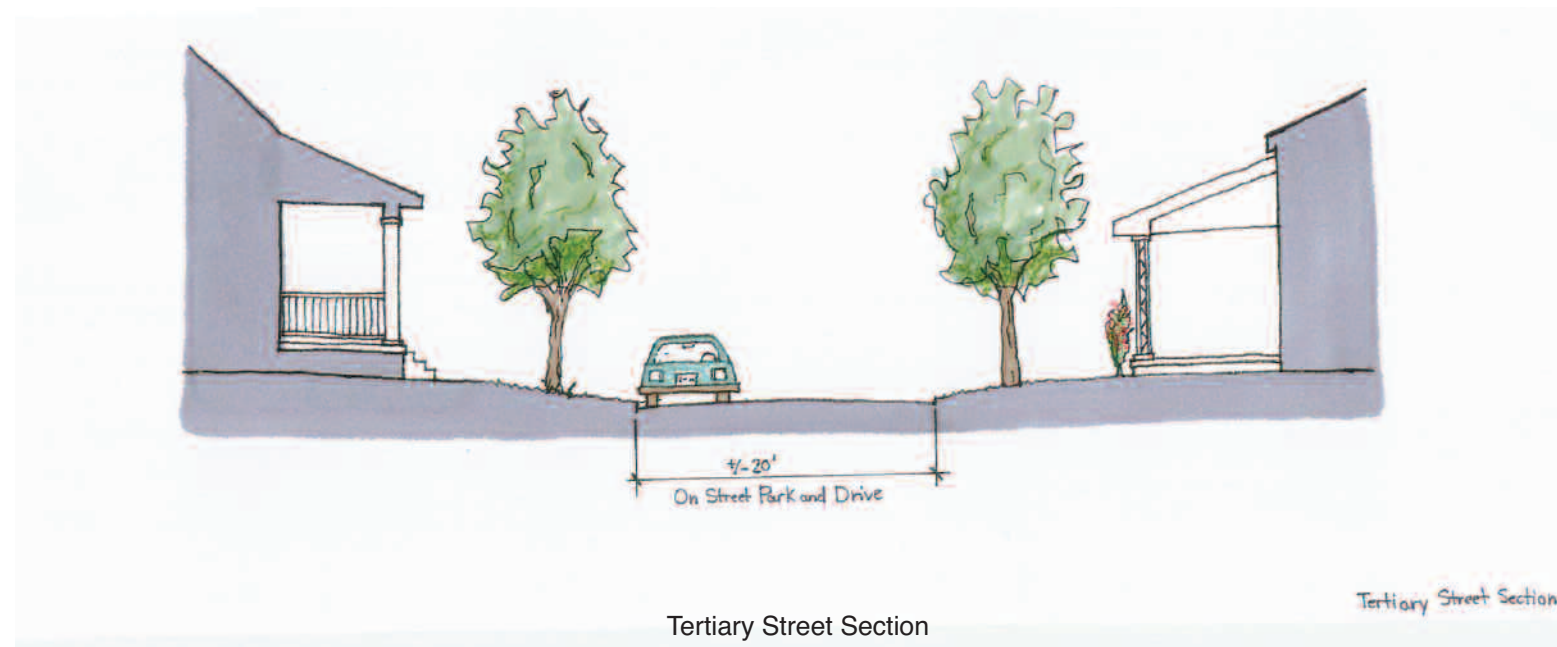




Primary Street Section



Secondary Street Section



Tertiary Street Section